Revival of Art Education from Grassroot to Secondary Level in Orissa



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Part - I

I consider it an honour to deliberate upon a topic that is volatile, controversial and at the same time extremely important as a factor for social development and nation building. This is a terrain which has kept us engaging all these years in our pursuit of excellence. This is at the root of the basic question that determines our survival as artists. But how seriously we are involved with the solution of the problem is debatable. But each one of us wish to see Orissa blossom into a state where the creative artists are not underfed, where the government and the public play a positive role in recognizing the works of art and the artists, and in strengthening, the social fabrics not merely in pronouncements but in actuality.

I begin with a famous quotation of Anand Coomaraswamy who held the view that **an artist is not a special kind of human being but every man is a special kind of artist, or else he is less than a human being.**

'Poetry is indispensible - if I only knew what for'. With this charmingly paradoxical epigram Jean Cocteau has summed up the necessity of art - as well as its questionable role in the late bourgeois world. Earnst Fischer. The Necessity of Art. Penguin Book 1963. P. 7

The term Art Education is a misnomer. I wonder how can there be Art without the component of language and literature ? If you compartmentalise education into Physics, Mathematics, English, History, Art, Music and

Sports, it will lead you to no where. The result will be a fragmented understanding, a truncated social milieu and fractured personality. Precisely this is the present reality from which we are not able to recover.

In the present social systems marked by increasing fragmentation and divisiveness, the narrowed vision of education as literacy only, reinforces centrifugal forces. Unlettered has come to be understood as being co-terminous with uncivilised. Literacy has become an instrument of oppression.

Education, instead of promoting equality has created ineuqal societies in India. In a country with multiple ethnic groups, multiple cultures and multiple languages, uniformity of education is bound to leave the society uninspired and unmotivated. Formal education in India appears to have reached a dead end. Educationists decry the products, but the state continues to multiply them. India has the third largest technical manpower in the world and yet there is a shortage of doctors in its hospitals, engineers in the rural electrification schemes and agricultural scientists in the field. Even the agricultural universities are located in the cities. It is in this context that efforts are made to promote non-formal education to reach beyond the school room. **This is exactly where there is no alternative to Art in education.**

The present system of education in India, from the preschool stage to higher education, had been imported from the West in bits and pieces over the last 200 years. The overall cultural contexts of Indian society and the cultural specialities of its varied segments have been ignored by this system, with the result that it has never been fully accepted

by the people. It hardly needs to be pointed out that the ecological inheritance, ethos and cultural commitment of Western societies have been quite different from those of oriental societies. The climate, natural environment, types of settlements, their historical evolution and the resultant goals and occupations, and the life-views of these societies have always been poles apart. This is the main cause of the continuing discord between education and society in India.

In the Indian concept, education is a concept of totality, fundamental for developing the personality of a child, the man. Education is a process of interaction with nature. It equips an individual with refined senses and sensibilities. It helps to create a beautiful world of harmony and peace. It unfolds immense potentialities and possibilities. It enlightens the interior space and makes the outer meaningful. Education is a continuity, a process of learning and becoming, a process of self discovery and fulfillment. It is both cognitive and intuitive. It is both material and spiritual. Gandhiji had advocated a system of education known by its familiar names - **'basic education'** and ***'Nai talim'*** Here manual and cerebral skills were in balance; the tools of education were through the use of hands and the utilisation of local resources natural and human. There was no undue emphasis on literacy. After fifty years of experimentation, there is a renewed recognisation of the relevance of the Gandhian model based on a total development of body, mind and soul, and values of restraint and self reliance and both self-sacrifice and self -fulfillment through community participation.

For me, Art in education, passes through three phases, namely :

(1) **Art as play or *leela* /manifestations in preschool context**

(2) **Art in education or beauty in education in school context**

(3) **Education in art or education, the essence of art in Post school context. (general and professional college).**

I like to elucidate my viewpoint. Art as play or *leela* orients children's inner being with cosmic vision of form, sound, colour, rhythm and harmony. The creations manifest in the child a holistic perception of the universe giving it an unlimited freedom of expression and language with aesthetic sensibility. A series of psychologists and art historians consider the play instinct/desire in man as the root for his impulse/wish to create. This play theory though not popular with adult artists is best suited to children. Marcel Duchamp said, (I quote) " **I found some common points between chess and painting.** When you play a game of chess it is like designing something or constructing some mechanism which you win or loose." Another devotee of games in art, Jean Tinguely, wrote on the subject in 1959 : (I quote) " **The relationship of art and play : to play is art - consequently I play. I play enraged".** Carla Gottlieb. ...and Modernism. Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited ... 1976. p. 36

Art in education in schools imparts a Midas touch to all the areas of learning and liberates the student from the stagnation of thinking and feeling. The role of art is significant because it bestows a much needed soothing impact on the teaching environment making it free from tension and adding to it strength, confidence and beauty.

Education in art focusses on the essentials of creative imagination. It broadens the perceptivity and infuses the principles of universality linking the creative efforts with

other frontiers of learning. It helps to diffuse rigidity and boundaries. Education provides a rationality and creates in a student, social consciousness making him/her responsible to the created universe and opens up a continued dialogue with the creator. Education in **art is " methoding of madness"**.

What is then Art ? Art is difficult to comprehend in any particular expression or through a set of expressions. In today's context, art has become still difficult to be explained in concrete words. Art is a tool which transforms life into living and makes living an art experience. Art has most of the properties of education. Question will naturally arise which art we are envisaging at ? - art as a skill or art as a creative process, art as an individual expression or art as the expression of the community, art as cultural specificity or art as global phenomenon? This dichotomy often makes us confused to proceed in the right direction. Skill, no doubt has be acquired through training but it has its own limitation since it cannot lead us to creativity. The view " **art for arts sake**" no doubt sounds smart but art as creative expression always establishes linkages. Art, always emerges from the 'local' milieu where the question of grassroot gets linked intimately. But art always addresses the 'global' because art is universal in its comprehension.

Art itself, is a social phenomenon : first, because the artist, however unique his primary experience might be, is a social being; second, because his work, however deeply marked by his primary experience and however unique and unrepeatable its objectification or form might be, is always a bridge, a connecting link between the artist and the other members of society; third because a work of art affects other people - it contributes to the reaffirmation or devaluation of

their ideas, goals or values - and is a social force which, with its emotional and ideological weight , shakes or moves people. (Adolfo Sancher, 1979)

Traditionally we talk of sixty-four arts (*Kala*) comprising skills ranging from horse riding to archery and love making. These are the arts one had to learn to be a worthy citizen in the society. But in the sphere of traditional art there is no dearth of creative ingenuity. Even the so called craft which are now being reproduced without any sense of innovation had a strong footing in the creative emergence . In India, unlike as in Europe, no principal distinction is made between fine arts and practical crafts. All handiwork (manufacture) is *Silpa*, from painting, sculpture, and architecture to pottery, weaving, engineering, mechanics, metal-casting, leather work, perfumery etc. and the term is also applicable in a certain sense to dance, music, poetry, drama, medicine etc.

To give you a broad spectrum of opinions on creative Arts, I quote from world renowned artists. David Smith in 1957 said " **Art is an arrogant independence to create**'. Andy Warhol in 1967 declared that "**Art is just to keep off the streets**". Jackson Pollock in 1956 made a statement " **Painting is self-discovery**". Self discovery presupposes self expression. Self expression is a want inherent in every human being because it serves as an affirmation of his existence. This want can be fulfilled in several ways, one of which is self expression through art. Self discovery is part of the discovery of the world in general. Scientific curiosity is another facet of such a thirst for knowledge; but, instead of centering on the person of the artist, it focusses on the work of art. The thirst for knowledge is, however, not so universal as the desire for self-expression - be it knowledge

per se or knowledge as a prerequisite to a better understanding of the world around us. Many artists consciously reject the acquisition of knowledge as an inhibiting agent of their creative power, confining their studies to subjects closely related to their craft. Others feel differently. Rather than express their egos, they try to capture the ego of the world in which they live.

Like self discovery and scientific curiosity, education also has a part in knowledge . It may be defined as the spreading of knowledge to others. Its basis is the altruistic goal of giving to others what you yourself enjoy and feel to be virtually important in life. However, education is a double-edged sword. It demands great moral integrity from the educator which wields the power to form the mind. If misused, this instrument can hurt more, than help.

Three of the motifs listed by contemporary artists for their work, self discovery, scientific curiosity, and education in sensitivity - are branches of the diffusion of knowledge. Bearing in mind the high esteem in which knowledge is held by science and the place scientific research occupies in contemporary life, there is nothing surprising in finding a parallel development in art. The other motivation is to develop human consciousness through art.

arla Gottlieb. Beyond Modern Art - P. 16

Art is a process as well as a journey. The journey is performed in a visual world of sensory experiences. A successful journey endows a person with refined sensibility and enhances quality of life. The journey is of an explanatory nature making one understand forms, shapes, colours, musical sounds, rhythms and the inner harmony - not only of outer nature but of one's own physical and mental bodies. The journey begins in the womb

and ends with death. It links a person with family, society, country and the world at large, in an established cultural context.

I like to bringin **'Art' as a tool to experience** the aesthetics of this long journey. Art not only is a skill as the 'art of living' in the present-day context, but as an 'act of transforming', where culture and ecology are relevant. I introduce art not merely as a tool, giving rise to consumer products but one which opens up the gates of a wider vision, a supernatural consciousness of beauty and inner perception of a world order.* Dinanath Pathi, "Art as a Tool, Cultural Rejuvenation". in Cultural Dimension of Education, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the A

Art which breeds in creative and contemplative vision is a reality when translated into properties of culture and education. The cultural translatability of 'art' should form a component of our educational system and this should have meaning in the context of education, culture and ecology. The cultural translatability needs a language to transform a multilingual and multi-peopled phenomenon into a global cultural ethic. The present educational system should be able to provide this 'tool', **the language of 'art'**. This may be experimented with using a scientific temper as an alternative mode.

Art in the context of the School

In the school context, it is not sufficient merely to categorize art as creative. It is necessary to appreciate its unique qualities as an aspect of human consciousness that no other field touches upon.

Art deals with the sense of vision in a way that no other subject can, particularly with the process of perception and

its expression in visible form and, uniquely, with the systematic development of visual aesthetic perception.

Art involves the management of perceptual responses, and also affects the working of these responses. They are personally significant expression of individuality.

A vast area of experience is available to us only through the sense of vision. Art is capable of giving shape and form to the ineffable, and there are strong links here with the sensual, mental and emotional life of the child.

1998 P. 138.

Art is directly linked to '**visual literacy**' and '**visual culture**', and no matter whether this is related to traditional or contemporary or both, the fact remains that the shape of our world is profoundly affected by our visual culture, and an informed acquaintance with it must be a part of the attributes to anyone counting themselves truly educated.

Art contributes to the school curriculum in two ways :

(1) Intrinsic - aesthetic /perceptual and discriminatory/ appreciative characteristics of the subject, and their attendant implications and offshoots.

(2) Collaborative - the addition of particular values to the 'learning process' e.g the characteristics cognitive attributes of creativity, comprising fluency, flexibility, originality and evolution.

In the field of education, the ideal of competition

has had two kinds of bad effects. On the one hand, it has led to the teaching of respect for competition as opposed to co-operation, especially in international affairs; and on the other hand, it has led to a vast system of competitiveness in the class-room, and in the endeavour to secure scholarships and subsequently in the search for jobs.

Bertrand Russell's observation on art in schools is very significant. (I quote) " To pass to more concrete considerations, take such a matter as children's drawing and painting. Most children from about five years old to about eight, show considerable imagination of a pictorial kind if they are encouraged but otherwise left free. Some, though only a small minority, are capable of retaining the impulse to paint after they have become self-critical. But if they have been taught to copy carefully and to aim at accurate representation, they become increasingly scientific rather than artistic, and their painting ceases to show any imagination. If this is to be avoided, **they must not be shown how to draw correctly** except when they themselves ask for instructions, and they must not be allowed to think that correctness constitutes merit. This is difficult for the teacher, since artistic excellence is a matter of opinion and individual taste, whereas accuracy is capable of objective tests. The social element in school education, the fact of being one of a class, tends, unless the teacher is ver exceptional, to lead to emphasis upon socially verifiable excellences rather than upon such as depend upon personal quality. **If personal quality is to be preserved, definite teaching must be reduced to a minimum** and criticism must never be carried to such lengths as to produce timidity in self-expression. But these maxims are not likely to lead to work that will be pleasing to an inspector."

The same thing, at a slightly later age, applies to the teaching of literature. **Teachers tend to teach too much and to make up silly rules of style**, such as that no sentence should begin with 'and' or 'but'. Definite rules of grammer must of course be observed, though even grammer is more elastic that most teachers suppose".

Bertrand Russell. Education & The Social Order

Art in schools should be a multimedia experience.

Unwin. Paperbacks. 1988 P. 103

National Art curriculum for Schools

The national curriculum for primary and secondary education framed by NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Traning) lays greater emphasis on art and creativity. This report laments the lack of adequate attention to art in schools. (I quote):

"**Art education and creative expression have not got adequate attention in school curriculum so far**. The aim of art education should be to sensitize the students so that they may learn to respond to the beauty in line, colour, form, movement and sound. The study of art and cultural heritage may enable the learners to appreciate and understand each other. The curriculum should aim at developing awareness of, and interest in, a wide variety of fine arts, both at the classical and the folk level.

While organising the curriculum NCERT lays out the following.

(I quote), 'Art education should be treated as an important area of curricular activity for all round development of the child'.

At the lower primary stage, the main objective of art

education is to make the child aware of the good and beautiful in his environment and to express his feeling through simple visual and performing arts like music, dance and drama, etc. At the primary stage, the main objective of art education should be to enable the child to discover and identify his own preferences through exposure to a variety of media and materials and to optimise his own capacity in one or more arts.

At the primary stage, art education programme shoud comprise (i) handling of the materials for drawing, painting, collage, clay modelling and construction of puppets; (ii) creating artistic things by free expression method and specific topics method; (iii) handling of simple musical instruments and sound producing bodies; (iv)movement, mime and simple dance forms; (v) community singing; (vi) simple concepts of visual and performing arts; (vii) stories of great personalities in the field of art; (viii) stories connected with the cultural heritage of the nation and of other countries.

At the secondary stage, art education should comprise (i) study of visual and aural resources and their exploration; (ii) projects leading to creative expression and exhibition of the works in visual and aural forms; (iii) intergroup, interschool art activities; (iv) study trips and interaction with artists in the community; (v) exploration of traditional art forms available in the community and neighbourhood.

Art education programme should concentrate on exposing the child to folk arts, local specific art and other cultural components, leading to an awareness and appreciation of our national heritage. Learning by doing

and a wide exposure to art forms is a must for self-expression and widening of the learner's own experience. Art education should not be fragmented. It should adopt an integrated approach at all stages up to class X.

It is ironical, that NCERT served its connection with art by closing the art department at their headquarters in Delhi after our friends. Dilip Bakshi, J.D.Virmani and Dharmani etc. retired. What a difference between the percepts and practices even at the national level.

Art Curriculum at State Level

During the last decades, the state educational authorities have designed curriculums for teaching by setting up the State Council of Educational and Training (SCERT), Board of Secondary Education and other similar bodies. Though the development of curriculum is a continuing process, the designers have side-lined the importance of art in education, ignoring its pivotal role in managing the perceptual awareness and cementing the inter disciplinary needs. Insensitive framing of syllabi has resulted in erosion of aesthetic values in education.

Teacher training is another important area to be handled carefully. The teacher training instutions generally rely on the subject matter competencies of the trainees prior to their entry to their porofessional course. These training institutions as such are not equipped adequately to make up the deficiency in the pre-service training so far as the content knowledge of the trainee teachers is concerned. The lack of real integration of the method of teaching with the content of teaching subject has still remained a major weak-

ness in the pre-service training. The curriculum research development and evaluation component and its linkage with pedagogy and learning theories in the training courses, are yet to be affectively implemented. It is, therefore, necessary to encourage innovation in designing the teacher education curriculum.

It is strange that there are no teacher training institutes for art teachers in Orissa. Without learning the methodology of teaching art in schools, the art programmes conducted by diploma or degree holder art teachers suffer from communication deficiencies. Since these artists are educated in contemporary art schools, they lack the vision to establish linkages and understand the local needs . I remember an art teacher, a friend of mine earlier posted in the district of Koraput complained to me that his headmaster does not understand art because he had failed to provide him Winser & Newton colours, handmade papers, sable hair brushes and easel for painting. I have a feeling that our friends in schools failed due to want of teacher training facilities and orientation programmes. Unless we think in terms of a teacher training course for the artists, the managers of education will think of a training course for other subject teachers with component of art in it (say 100 marks a paper). I have the information that the Regional College of Education has such a course for other subject teachers. The idea is not to appoint art teachers in schools, instead to ask these specially trained teachers to take up teaching of art in schools. This will be a complete suicidal of our endeavours. Therefore the Lalit Kala Akademi should move a proposal for establishment of a Teachers Training College for artists in Orissa to train them as able art teachers.

Following the national curriculum model of the

NCERT, the SCERT has developed a curriculum for the state schools which has been further revised in the light of the new national education policy, a decade ago. Everything said and done, the fact remains that the facilities of education in the primary level in Orissa is deplorable. Thousands of villages go without schools and schools without teachers. Even a single teacher has to manage the entire teaching programme. In such a situation the concept of a separate art teacher would be a dream not only in the present context but for years to come. Therefore the strategy should be to reorient and sensitise the primary teacher so that the child could manifest its *leela* sensibly with vision and education. Alternatively our artists should be prepared to take up responsibilities of teaching in primary schools to make teaching of art a reality.

Rights of the Child

Education of the child is enshrined as a fundamental right in the charter of United Nations. It states that the preparation of the child as a responsible citizen in a free society, in a spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes and friendship among peoples, ethnic, national and regional groups and persons of indigenous origin is the duty of every government. Education should in that spirit foster " **a respect for cultural pluralism**".

Our Creative Diversity. Report of the world commission on culture and Development 1995. pp. 232.

Instead of talking on the entire school education in the light of the above contention, let us think of the preschool education in Orissa.

Preschool in Orissa is comparatively a new concept and unfortunately in this sphere, the english medium schools play a major role. Although these schools provide space

for art and provision for appointment of art teachers, the methodology they follow is rudimentry and stagnating. They encourage model drawings and fill-in drawings from printed books mostly imported from outside the state. These drawings have no contextuality and the images given to the child are alien to the local needs The child is confronted with a hostile nature and unfriendly society in these imported motifs. This could be better understood if I quote a nursery rhyme

Baa Baa Black Sheep
Have you any wool?
Yes Sir! Yes Sir! Three bags full
One for my master,
One for my dame,
And one for the little boy
Who lives down the lane.

It is really unfortunate that these nursery rhymes have replaced the Oriya ones quitely. The visual image that is created with the help of a nursery rhyme is very significant, because we should not allow a wrong motif to get imprinted on the mind of the child. If this is not taken care of, to talk of grassroot revival without providing a suitable alternative from our own culture will be a talk in the void. But there are certain nursery and prenursery schools which are making positive attempts to put local culture into their teaching programmes. I like to mention that the art programmes in the Ruchika School are quite imaginative. I know this through my association with them in a few of their programmes.

Broadening the concept of Creativity

Everyone is potentially creative. An over emphasis on rationality alone technocratic reasoning, restrictive organisational or community structures and over reliance on traditional approaches can restrict or destroy the potential All the people need to communicate their experiences, their hopes and fears, as they have always done and many local initiatives help them to do so without having to ask whether, what they are doing is 'creative' or even 'art'. It is sufficient that the people act in a stimulating way to sustain themselves . This is where the local wisdom lies. This is where the local arts have an important role to play and this is precisely being threatened of self destruction.

The creative approach cannot be taught or commanded, it has to be nurtured whenever it appears . In spite of its universal potential in a favourable environment, the spark of artistic creativity is in fact so rare that it needs careful fanning when ever it flickers in the hope of generating a fire. If you move throughout Orissa in search of creativity in art you will be surprised that many of these indigenous channels have been closed and the few that exists, needs renovation and renewal before everything dies out.

Art was a part and parcel of living. It used to fulfill the basic functions of life. It used to endow a human being with the fulness of purpose, but today art stands completely divorced from life and society. Art, it seems has no role to influence the life patterns. Even this is happening in the case of indigenous people in Orissa whose life's breath was art.

The arts are the most immediately recognisable form

of creativity. All art deserves loudation as the representative of the concept of creativity, since it springs from imagination. Yet while the arts are among the highest form of human activity, they grow out of the soil provided by the more modest routines of daily life. They provide people with opportunities to consider and communicate their reality and vision in new ways. In a world of commodified culture however, creativity is too often taken for granted or dismissed. Perhaps this is because it is not always understood and is difficult to measure.

Tradition is not immutable. It has evolved through generations in the never ending process of invention, elimination and drawing on other cultures. This pluralism in the creative process has depened today both at individual level, as artists and arts from different cultural backgrounds, particularly in music and the visual arts, enrich the world repertory of 'high art' and at the collective level, in the creative opposition often perceived as a tension within the global and the local.

" **Creation comes to mean rebellion**. And the more human existence is banalized and robbed of its true richness, the more the artist feels the need to express his human richness in a concrete - sensuous object - outside the dominant social and artistic institutions."•

Art at grassroot level

No society has renounced its right to posses its own art and its consequent right to influence art. Art is almost as old as man himself: that is, almost as old as society.

Art used to empower individuals at grassroot level and provide inspiration for their own protection and renewal. Cultural expression at the local or the grassroot level ... group identity ... social organisation and community to generate social energy, to overcome feelings of inferiority and alienation, to teach and raise awareness, to promote creativity and innovation, to help cope with the challenges of cultural differences and to enter the economy directly through production of goods and services.

If the social relations between art and society are of interest both to the artist and to society, it is because artistic activity is an essential human activity. It is essential to the artist who realizes in his creation the essential power of his being at the sametime that he establishes, by objectifying the richness of humanity, a new and orginal means of communication between himself and others.

Introduction of modern technology in the society has enlarged the scope of human aspirations and needs. While technology took the role of empowerment, it deprived the human being of its intrinsic values. Technology also brought a challenge. It flooded the market with monodesigned goods replacing local crafts. This onslaught of machine goods posed the greatest hindrance for the local crafts and the artists who now are left without the support of the society, moved away from their hereditary art. They had to close down all their workshops in villages creating an aesthetic vaccum in the social structure and migrate to towns and cities. These artists crowded the urban centres and an ugly competition and commercialisation took over their artistic products and the value of their craft was measured in terms of money. The government failed to protect them and their craft. They

were left forlorn. There was no sale of local handicrafts which were pushed away by an ugly competition. There was no balanced procurement system. As a result, the age old craft tradition which used to hold the roots of culture firmly was loosened.

Particularly in Orissa, one has to be extremely cautious not to destroy our art heritage in such thoughtless planning. I have a strong suggestion that the department of handicrafts should provide raw material resource centres in local areas and reactivise the handicraft production. Like the movement that is being generated in Orissa for protection of the oriya language, the artist should think of some sort of intensive programme to reinstill faith in traditional handicrafts, beginning with pottery and basketry to painting and stone carving. Unless the excellence in handicrafts is recognised and the standard is fixed for the handicraft production, the phenomenal growth of handicraft sale will result in draining of local resources. I think as artists, we have a definite role in this.

The extension wing of the Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology is making efforts to place the handicrafts in the context of rural agricultural programmes through the home scientists posted in Krushi Vigyan Kendras (KVK) throughout Orissa. If this succeeds, then it will provide an alternative mode to handicraft production at the grassroot level.

But, we are fortunate that the Orissan Handloom Industry is making great strides. Orissan handlooms have become a fashion at the national level and it is understood that there are about two lakh eleven thousand weavers employed in the handloom sector. This is a reality for us to

understand the potential of Orissa's traditional textiles. In the handicraft sector, there would be roughly forty thousand craft persons employed . If we consider all of them as artists of some kind, then Orissa can boast of having two lakh forty thousand freelance traditional artists living on their trade. Therefore it would be extremely relevant to organise this sector for optimum benefits when we talk of revival of art at the grassroot level. People of Orissa should learn to use and appreciate handcrafted items and textiles to boost Orissan craftpersons and weavers.

As per 95-96 census, Orissa has five thousand nine hundred sixty seven secondary schools, twelve thousand ninety five middle schools and forty two thousand, hundred and five primary schools. These schools have one lakh ninety six thousand fifty teachers for six crore ten lakh and six thousand students. Out of say two lakh teachers, the number of art teacher would be hardly three to four hundred. What a pity that the government is unable to protect the interests of this minority group, although out of four hundred only a hundred would be in the state government sector. Can the government that boasts of Orissa's art heritage not think of appointing art teachers in aleast secondary schools in a phased manner say only a hundred teachers per year? There are about six thousand secondary schools in Orissa and such an employment scheme will save the dying species of art teachers in the state while creating an aesthetic environment in the schools. **The government of Orissa suffers from it own contradictions because the department of education denies jobs to artists who are trained by the department of culture.** This is an administrative imbalance and needs to be sorted out soon.

Time has changed. The phenomenon of unprecedented explosion of knowledge has become a permanent curriculum concern almost overriding many other considerations. This has necessitated a built in mechanism for providing opportunities for continuous and lifelong programmes of education. The new opportunities offered by scientific advancement and technological development have led to the reorientation of the educational system to make it more relevant and functional. Here we must use art as a mean for self-defence against the evils of complete technocratisation of educational systems.

The last two decades have seen the emergence of an information processing technology with manifold curricular implications. On the other hand it offers opportunities for a significant reduction in the drudgery involved in the in formation load and, on the other, a thorough re-orientation of our thinking and approach vis-a-vis the use of new tools and techniques, computer hardware and software. It is widely recognised that an appropriate use of this technology promises to bring about far more productive use of teacher's and learner's time, give new meaning to the teaching-learning process and make education accessible to much wider section of learners who have so far been deprived of a rich learning environment.

As creative people we must be extremely cautious of the side effects of technological impact on education. We must rise to the demands of time and reorient ourselves to meet the challenge. Now the barriers in art have melted down, and the definitions and meanings of art have changed. Art no longer is confined to a product but art is now understood as a process. We must not stick to a colonial art structure with an outdated curriculum aimed at only skill

orientation. We must allow ourselves to the change and accomodate the new wave that seems to engulf the whole world around. We, as artists should not lag behind but confront this great challenge with a renewed perception and understanding.

Studying in a college of art does not make a person a creative artist. As Joseph Beuys has rightly observed (I quote), "One day most art students will recognise that they do not qualify as artists. But, if they become a locksmith or housewife, or as far as I am concerned, a utilitarian graphic artist, the time of their study must not have gone to waste. This is what I mean, when I say, it is for me more important to know that somebody has learned with me how to educate his children in a better way, and less important to know that somebody has become a great artist."

I am reminded of the anguished cry of the Venetian painter Carlo Ridolfi who voiced in his book *The Wonders of Art* about Venetian artists.(I quote) " There is no profession ... in which you may expect less happiness and contentment than in painting. For a painter, before he can attain even a moderate degree of perfection, has to submit to so many drudgeries and toils, that they exceed human credibility. Nor, after so much sweating may he expect even a little applause unless some wind of favourable fortune turns up to blow him into the harbor. Wherefore it often happens that his life ends in misery and want" Even an artist like Picasso is bewildered with the question " **What is that forces one to enter a profession beset with difficulty, toil, and distress and also lacking the assurance of adequate compensation"**

This is very true for the artists in Orissa. Many of us

concerned with art ponder this question, and many of these many are the artists themselves.

Carla Gottlieb

Let us remember Robert Morris statement in 1970 when he said, (I quote) "Art is an activity of change, of disorientation and shift, of violent discontinuity and mutability of the willingness for confusion even in the service of discovering new perceptual modes".

"A Prelude with chaos" · Beyond Modern Art. Clarke. Inc

Before I conclude the first part of the presentation of the paper I like to suggest you to read *Totto Chan - The Little Girl at the Window'* by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi. This engaging series of childhood recollections tells about an ideal school in Tokyo during World War II that combined learning with fun, freedom and love. This unsual school had old railroad cars for classrooms, and it was run by an extraordinary man - its founder and headmaster Sosaku Kobayashi - who was a firm believer in freedom of expression and activity.

In real life, the Totto-Chan of the book has become one of Japan's most popular television personalities - Tetsuko Kuroyanagi. She attributes her success in life to this wonderful school and its headmaster.

The charm of this account has won the hearts of millions of people of all ages and made this book a runaway best seller in Japan, with sales hitting the 4.5 million mark in its first year.

To conclude, may I pose a pertinent question : **Do we love children enough to make them what they can become, 'free citizens of the Universe'?**

Part - II

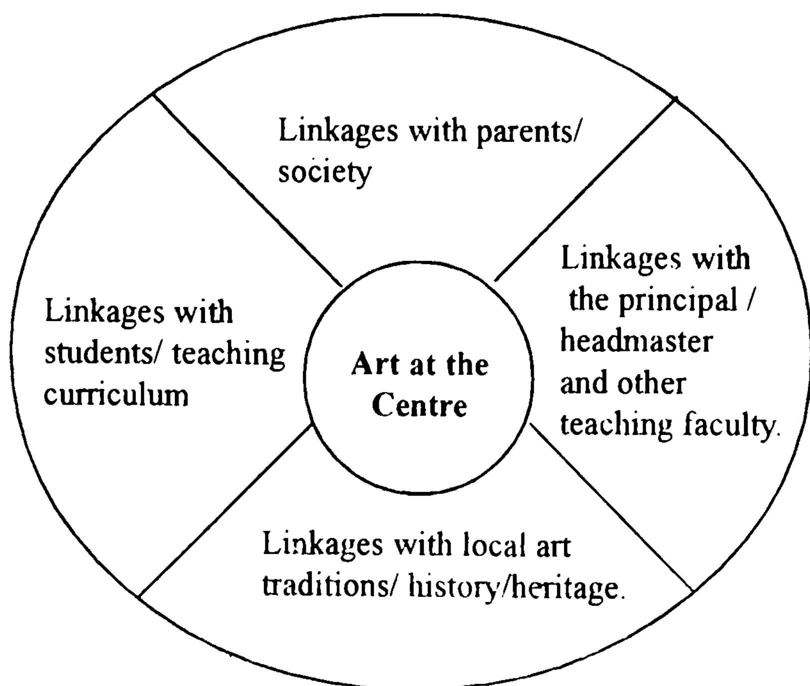
The second part of my presentation deals with eight modules. Out of these modules four have been designed by me, two in collaboration with Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts and Indira Gandhi National Open University and two adopted from *The Art Teacher's Hand Book* by Robert Clement. Out of the four designs, I have presented the first two in an international seminar at Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts which is published in the book '*The Cultural Dimension of Education*' by UNESCO Chair in the field of Cultural Development and Indira Gandhi National Centre for the arts 1998.

Since these are my personal experiments, I and my friends appear in these as resource persons, and these experiments are related to the institutions, I had the occasion to serve.

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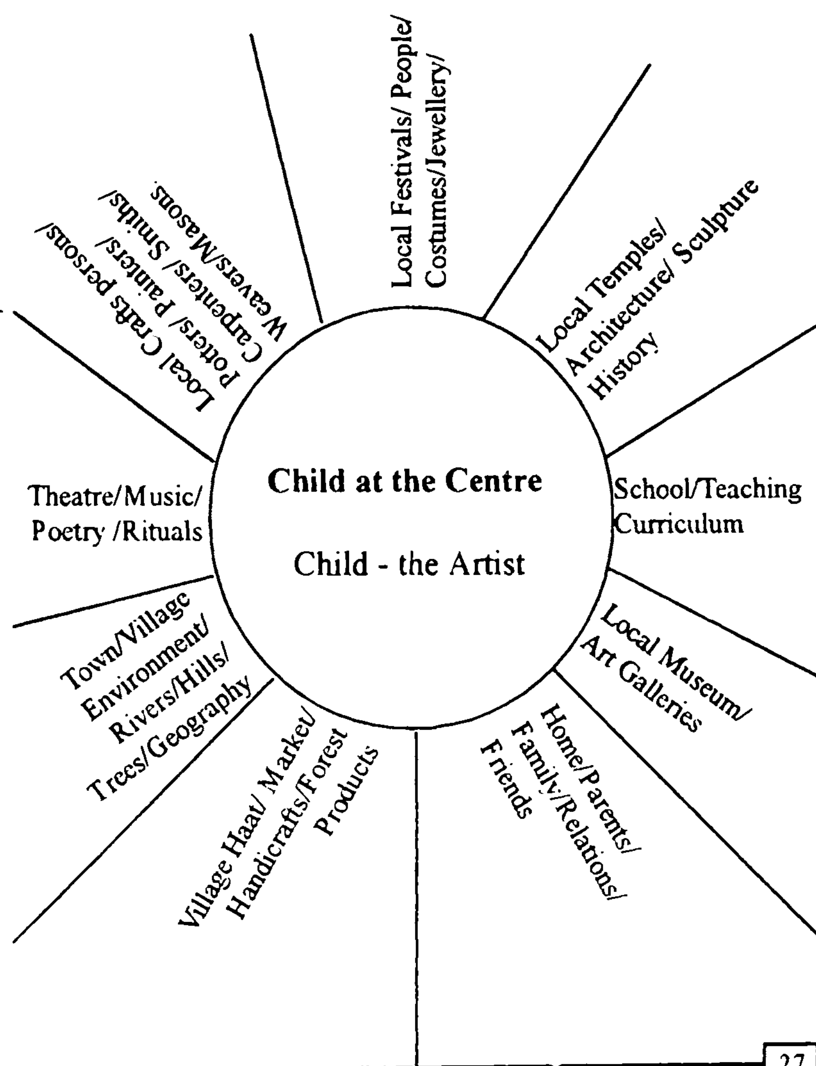
Module No.I: Art in Education.

I have segregated the areas where art operates, one at the preschool/ school level and the other at professional college level . At the school level art is the central focus in the entire educational programmes, where as in the professional level, the education takes the centre space. There is a basic difference and the difference is vital to streamlining curriculums at both these levels. The evils of teaching art in schools as an independent study without any contextuality with other areas has resulted in isolation of the subject 'Art' in schools and finally led to the removal of the art teachers from the teaching community. The art teacher initially compartmentalised his vision and failed to establish an interdisciplinary approach. Therefore in order to revive the lost grounds we, as art educators have to bring in art at the centre.



Module II : Art in Education

The art educator has to take the initiative to establish the linkages . He should inspire and motivate the child to understand the role of 'Art' in the linkages.



Module III : Art in Education

Teaching Strategies and Resources

Like any other teacher, an art teacher can use a variety of systems and resources in support of his work. The interplay between teaching systems and support material plays a very important part in determining both the quality of experience provided by the art teacher for the children and the nature of their response. The art teacher who fills his room with interesting collection of natural man-made things, good photographs and reproductions of works of art and who directs the children's attention towards the environment that surrounds the school, achieves more than half way towards ensuring that the children have sufficient to feed the mind's eye.

Such basic visual provision as this can be made even more effective when the visual experiences are well matched to the variety of strategies that the art teacher can use to focus children's attention and to generate the quality of discourse and enquiry i.e the hall mark of the really effective teacher.

Here is a list of various teaching system and resources that used in different combinations will provide with a variety of strategies in support of your work.

Systems

Telling them (exposition)
Questioning
(teacher-based)
Discussion
(teacher /child)
Interaction (between
children)
Enquiry (child-based)
Tasks
Writing -copying
note-taking
information
collecting
Resource collecting
Worksheets
Questionaires
Doodling
Mark -making
Image-collecting
Image making
etc.

Resources

Images
Natural things
Man-made things
The environment
Places
Events
People
The school
Children
Words
Sounds
Music
Prose
Poetry
Children's work
Works of art
Artists
Exhibitions
Etc.

Note: By far the most important system any teacher can use is that of generating enquiry through talk, whether through exposition, questioning, discussion or interaction. There is no doubt, that there is strong correlation between the quality of children's work in art and the amount and quality of discourse that both precedes and supports the work. There is very clear evidence for this, especially in the work that is done in many primary schools, where good class teachers who have had very little experience or training in art are able to generate work of considerable quality simply through

their ability to focus children's observation and perception through good talk in support of their looking.

(This module is taken from the *Art teacher's Handbook* by Robert Clement).* p. 69

Here I like to quote from my own article "Art as a tool for Cultural Rejuvenation" included in *The Cultural Dimension of Education* published by UNESCO Chair in the field of Cultural Development and Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts.

An Experiment:

I was teaching drawing and painting to children from K.G. to Class X in the Kendriya Vidyalaya, Bhubaneswar. The school had no fixed syullabus to teach art. I did not want to provide model drawings on the blackboard to students for skill-oriented exercises. This I considered quite detrimental to the growth of creativity in children. On my initiative, the school provided sketch books to children and I inspired to draw whenever and whatever they felt like recording from life expericnces. At regular intervals, I glanced through their sketch books and picked up sketches which attracted me from the point of view of innovative approach, creative excellence and pedagogic linkages. The subject matter children drew in their sketchbooks was quite varied with motifs from daily life and school books. They were attracted equally by a bicycle rider and the Prime Minister flying in a helicopter, the village goddess with portruding tongue , as well as their favorite film stars. The renderings of children varied a great deal depending on their faculties. These sketches also reflected their social consciousness and the interaction with their environment.

My intention in teaching visual art in school was to integrate it with the other subject areas, a child is expected to learn, and not as an independent compartamentalised subject. This method yielded a lot of benefits. While making a picture, a student used to learn not only about the picture he was drawing but several other facts and incidents connected with that picture and the entire cultural context. 'Art' in school therefore was a part of the total learning system to provide an aesthetic orientation to the child, whether it was mathematics or science, geography or literature. The Kendriya Vidyalayas project multilingual and multicultural content, since their students are drawn from all over the country.

Once, while discussing with students, the composition of a winter night, a number of possibilities came up. Since the students had come from various socio-economic backgrounds, they had different notions of a winter night. Some suggested a winter night in a sleepy tiny village around an open fire. Others imagined the winter night inside a house near the fire place in the company of family members. A group of other students went for a more sophisticated environment and visualised the winter night warmed by an electric heater. When the pictures were drawn there were a number of innovative depictions from different socio-cultural settings.

Observations:

Most of our art teacher friends in Orissa are not sensitive to the immense possibilities, teaching of art commands. They try to segregate art from other teaching disciplines in school as well as environmental studies. This has resulted in narrowing the scope of art to mere

blackboard drawing. In the primary level since it is not normally possible to appoint art teachers, the responsibility of teaching of art is generally given to any subject teacher, preferably the class teacher. In certain schools, misgivings persist among teachers as to which subject area is greater whether the art/s or the sciences? The art teachers should be able to convince such teachers the scientific temper of the creative arts and try to place art in the context of science. A large number of headmasters are of the opinion that art is only black board drawing and learning of art doesnot help the growth of understanding of a student. The idea of fetching good marks in the examinations occupy their minds as well as of students "The few who go through the ladder of competition undoubtedly 'achieve', but in the process they are uprooted and certainly unaligned with the very ground from which they were nurtured. The large number acquire minimal skills of literacy and bookish knowledge. Their harmonious world of work, function and ideation and faith is dead, and the new world is powerless to be born". (Kapila Vatsyayan. Cultural Dimension of Education. P. VIII)

Module No IV :Art in Education

Using works of Art

Evidence of the work of artists, craftsmen and designers, whether in original form or in reproduction can provide children with very real support to their own studio work. It should be part of every art teacher's armoury to use that mass of evidence that exists in the world of art to help children clue into the various ways the familiar problems of representing and making have been dealt with in contemporary art and in that of the past.

George Braque is reputed to have said, ' All art springs from nature and from art'. We can rightly ask the children to seek for their inspiration and information within the natural and man-made world that surrounds us; we can also ensure that in the pursuit of the world of experience they refer to and use that quality and range of seeing that is so evident in the work of other artists.

The use of works of art to generate discussion and appraisal with children, and to feed their own knowledge of ways of seeing and making, has much more meaning for them than the traditional and conventional notion of teaching 'art history'. Many art teachers have consciously rejected the use of works of art with children simply because of their own experiences of being taught the history of art through a sequential and fact collecting routine!

The simplest way of engaging children in some kind appraisal is to give them a selection of prints or reproductions, to ask them to select the one painting they particularly like and to explain and extend upon their choice.

An art teacher has to remember that 'liking' a picture can be as decisive as 'disliking'it, and that you will need to pursue the question of like and dislike vigorously by, for example asking them to distinguish between their liking for the content (what story the painting tells) and their liking for the way the artist has used the elements of visual form to put the image together.

In the previous module (module no III Strategies and Resources) it has been pointed that to engage the children in the preliminary discussion amongst themselves and in small groups before trying to generate class discussion about a painting or a group of paintings is always productive. One method is to divide the class into groups and to give each group the same set of postcard reproductions of paintings, asking each group to determine democratically their order of preference. Then the art teacher has to compare the findings of each group and the qualities they find in the most popular work.

The use of description to generate children's responses to a work of art needs to take into account the stage the children are at in their own image- making. For younger children, simple objective description of content is frequently enough to arouse their interest. Older children need more than objective description to maintain their interest, as they are often as much concerned with what the painting means as with what it appears to describe. They respond well to works that have layers of meaning (which goes some way to explaining their interest in surrealism and fantasy), because they have begun to realize in their own response to images that images have meanings over and above their appearances.

It is natural for many children to want to draw their

favourite paintings in support of their comments and written descriptions. For many, the drawing or copying of a painting is a genuine fonn of appraisal and may give them understanding of the work which would be difficult to achieve through the more formal means of language.

(Module adopted from *The Art Teacher's Handbook* by Robert Clement.)

Using the Works of Art in a Museum

In Orissa, the musems are fossilised insituttions with dead objects. The museums do not have extension programmes for children, thereby depriving children of the contextuality with country's cultural heritage. The school text books do not mention the unique stone sculptures, illustrated palmleaf manuscripts and other artefacts displayed in the museum. Bringing out picture cards and posters of antiquities preserved in the museums and adopting schools for extension programmes will undoubedtly open up new avenues of learning facilities. Visits of children to the museum galleries in the context of learning could introduce and induct them into the visual culture and give them a new language. In Western countries the relation between the museum and the school is a reality and the teachers are trained in advance to guide children through the galleries and conduct classes inside the museums. I have personal experience of watching swiss children using the Indian sections in the Museum Rietberg, at Zurich.

The reproduction available in central Lalit Kala Akademi's Regional Centre at Bhubaneswar could be used as visual properties in implementing this module to teach art in Orissan schools. The centre for Cultural Resources and Training, New Delhi has developed a number of printed

materials on art and culture ranging from visual art to performing arts to monuments and handicrafts.These are extremely helpful for art teaching in schools. The centre also provides a cultural kit to teachers who undergo teachers' orientation programme. But the teachers after they return from training to their schools do not use these kits.

Module No V : Distant Education in Learning of Visual Art

In spite of several publications, exhibitions, art workshops and seminars, the contemporary art could not reach the grassroot level and remained alien to the common man. Along with this the modern sensibilities related to art and culture largely remained unknown to the people on the streets who considered art as an elitist affair. Therefore to popularise contemporary art and to take it to the people, I had designed a ' Distant Education in Learning of Visual Art' programme in the Central Lalit Kala Akademi in collaboration with the Indira Gandhi National Open University. The Indira Gandhi Open University has designed several courses including Tourism and Homescience which have been successfully implemented throughout the country.

Basing on this premise and after consultation with the then Vice- chancellor Prof. Tekewal and Dean of Social Sciences Prof Pandav Nayak, it was decided to design the contents and implement the course. As per the arrangement the Lalit Kala Akademi would contribute the visual art content to the course and the University would be responsible for its dissemination through its vast TV network and counselling centres. We were extremely hopeful of the outcome.

Several meetings were held with renowned professors of art from various universities and faculty members of the open university. The course contents and the methodology of implementation was decided. The finance commitment on the part of the Lalit Kala Akademi was to the tune of rupees ten lakhs to be contributed in two phases. The Akademi normally had an annual budget of about three

crores and its annual contribution of rupees five lakhs was not a big amount. But the Department of Culture government. of India didn't agree to finance this project and therefore the programme had to be dropped.

It is really a very sad affair that the government of India failed to realise the importance of such a novel and substantial project aimed at sensitising and educating the common mass in our country. We normally think, that money is readily available to such projects at the national level, but the importance given to visual art and culture even at the national level is negligible. The state Lalit Kala Akademi may think of the possibility of implementing such a project through local TV and SIET which I am sure will bring immense benefit to the common man in understanding our art and the cultural heritage.

This distant learning programme was based on the model of Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) with a different thrust and intent. Now a number of programmes are available in the multimedia package like SITE, INSAT, RPP (Radio Pilot Project) LPT etc. At the school level, wide scale application of Audio, Radio and Low Cost Aids and Experiments need to be undertaken for meaningful transaction of curriculum

Module VI : Contemporary Art Awareness Programme (CAAP)

The central Lalit Kala Akademi largely because of my initiative had for the first time instituted a committee on art education although earlier it had organised one or two seminars on art education. But the suggestions made in the seminars could not be made operative because the so called eminent artists thought that it is beyond the dignity of the central Lalit Kala Akademi to conduct programmes in schools initially because it was the National Academy for Art and they did not like the idea of conducting competition or on the spot painting events in schools.

To enlarge the scope of dissemination of art, the Akademi agreed to my proposal to design a contemporary art awareness programme as a pilot project to be implemented in five Delhi schools to begin with and later in about hundred schools all over the country depending on the budget allocation. The Akademi prepared a kit consisting of selected transparencies on art, monographs on artists, films on art and artists, and reproductions of works of art available in the archieves of the Akademi. It also prepared a small monograph on the history of art which could be told in a story format to the children. The kit also had drawing papers, colours and graphic materials and implements for demonstration purpose. The programme was designed for a five day session in a school under the leadership of a creative artist/ retired professor of art as resource person. The consents of the principals/headmasters were obtained and they were quite enthusiastic about this programme.

This programme could be implemented only in one or two schools in Delhi and the idea of implementing this in

hundred schools remained a distant dream because the government of India refused to sanction money and this had to be dropped.

During my tenure as secretary of the Akademi, I invited school children from Delhi schools to visit national and other important exhibitions at Rabindra Bhavan gallaries and ensured that their visits be guided by eminent artists / art teachers. I remember I had personally along with children made the gallary visits educative and fruitful. In this programme the centre for Cultural Resources and Training lend their school buses as a gesture of their collaboration.

Module VII : Know your Heritage - Reading Material

Know your heritage basically is a publication programme. Realizing the dearth of publication materials on art specially written for children and the common man, Dr. Smt. Kapila Vatsyayan, an eminent art historian and cultural educator of this country and the Academic director of Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts proposed to the Akademi to bring out a series of books in local languages on the art heritage of the country. She had in mind that these books will have a different thrust not toeing the lines of historical structure but with an innovative thematic approach with lots of visual material. It was decided that the first set of publications will be in Oriya, Bengali, Telugu and Tamil languages on the themes of the sun, water, trees,lotus and deer . There was a committee of three renowned persons including Sri Haku Shah and Prof. R.C.Sharma to guide the writers. Research assistants were appointed by the Akademi to collect materials.

It was decided that in the initial stage the Akademi would putin its contribution of rupees ten lakhs and the Indira Gandhi Centre would have the same amount as their contribution. I was confident that such an ambitious publication programme had never been thought of in this country with such eminent and imaginative people at the designing and implementing stage. But most unfortunately again due to the non cooperation of the Department of Culture, government of India, this publication programme had to be dropped.

In our country, publication of books, monographs, art reproductions, cards on art and culture for children are rare. The few that are available in the market lack innovation and

appeal. These fail to sensitise the learners. We have never thought of using Orissan traditional art motifs in the modern context. Designing of children books need careful planning and execution. Our Akademi president Sri Mukherji has vast experience in designing books. I would therefore suggest that the State Akademi should takeup designing of at least five books to begin with on the contemporary artists of Orissa. Initially the books may cover artists like, Gopal Charan Kanungo, Sarat Chandra Debo, Muralidhar Tali, Bipin Bihari Choudhury and Bimbadhar Verma. These books will be addressed exclusively to children. The department of education could be a partner in this programme.

UNICEF with huge aids is bringing out books on different developmental programmes. I have the information that they are spending a few crores in Orissa. I wonder whether we could be able to take a small slice out of this and use if for "know your heritage" programme.

Module VIII : Workshops as Alternative to Art Competitions

Psychologists and art educationists denounce art competitions among school children and awarding of prizes to the selected best works judged by an adult jury. This is primarily because, a creative work of art cannot be put to judgement. Moreover children from different socio-cultural backgrounds and with different mind sets are not expected to respond in a manner to be later judged and appreciated by a group of adults with pre conceived notions Since judging has to be always objective, it hurts the creative spirits of the young artists. Experience shows that the parents take material benefit out of these competitions to project their sons and daughters as promising young artists which proves detrimental to the creative disposition of the child. It is again the parents who disuade their children not to takeup visual art seriously as a future career. In selection of the career of their children they are normally guided by job prospects.

Because of this, the Sunanda Pathy Foundation with which I am also associated stopped conducting art competitions among children. Instead, the Foundation has designed a workshop module to be implemented in village schools. The first workshop was conducted in the Sisupalagada,a village in the vicinity of Bhubaneswar last year. The workshop lasted for a day starting from nine in the morning till six in the evening. The resource persons were Prof. Rajendra Prasad Das, an eminent archaeologist and writer, his wife Soudamini Das, a folk painter and writer, Asim Basu, a popular artist , theatre personality, and writer, Chandrasekhar Rao, painter and handicraft designer, Ramahari Jena, painter and print maker, Jagannath Panda, sculptor and Dinanath Pathy. The group landed up in the

village and started contacts with villager and teachers of the local school. With the consent of a house owner they cleaned the wall of the house, plastered it with the cowdung and started painting a mural. Slowly a group of children and adult gathered around and took interest in the activity. At another location Ramahari Jena organised a group of young children and with their help made prints on paper and cloth. The children gradually showed interest and brought pieces of cloth from their homes to print in this workshop. The news spread to the school and the children slowly started filtering in followed by the class teachers. At another location, Jagannath Panda built up a mud mural with collaging of mirror pieces and cowries. This also attracted groups of children who assisted Jagannath Panda in his mural. Rajendra Prasad Das and Asim Basu did the talking and explained the significance of this workshop. Asim Basu had a few enthusiastic theatre boys. and Rajendra Prasad Das a number of students in this village. This helped us to establish the relation. At the wall mural site, the college going girls took initiative to join the group. Soudamini Das could collect a large following of elderly ladies who joined her to draw jhotis on the floor. Chandrasekhar Rao was helped by another group of college girls who said they also knew how to draw jhotis. That was the occasion for them to draw

Towards the evening it was almost the whole village at the workshop site interacting with the resource persons of the group. The villagers said this was a unique experience for them in the village and as an event this would have a lasting impression because they had not known a workshop of this kind ever conducted in their village.

The school teachers who were initially reluctant to let their children go, at the end could derive maximum

benefit as the children returned home with beaming faces. They invited the group to the school for another workshop some other day.

Another experiment

D.N Rao with the assistance of his students conducted a number of workshops among children and women in Saura area. This workshop programme had been sponsored by Ministry of Human Resources Development, government of India. I functioned as the co-ordinator of this programme. The idea of this workshop stemmed from the research project on Sauras conducted by the Crafts Council of Orissa in which both D.N Rao and I were involved.

The basic intention was to create awareness among the Saura children about their own artistic tradition which is on the verge of dying out because of urbanisation and change of religious practices. The Saura art traditions are quite primitive and the state Lalit Kala Akademi has also done a publication and a film on the Saura art.

We visited different villages and invited children to their community house or underneath a tree to gather. We supplied them papers, pencils, sketch books, and sketch pens. The children collected red ochre from the locality and lime/ rice paste and charcoal from their houses for painting. The initial reluctance of the children slowly melted away when we showed our book, *The Painted Icons* where their parents figured as painters. With more and more children joining, the small group initially collected for the workshop turned out to be a community participation. We repeated this experience in about thirty villages in this area. There is a proposal to cover about hundred villages in Ganjam Gajapati,

Jeypore and Koraput districts.

I would therefore venture to recommend workshop module as a positive alternative for art activity in village schools and would urge the Lalit Kala Akademi to take up workshop/ child art participation programmes to spread art to villages and to revive the forgotten heritage.

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